

Conference Abstract

Building the Beaty: Creating, Maintaining, and Growing a Publicly Accessible Biodiversity Museum Collection in the Pacific Ring of Fire

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Abstract

Eight years from the grand opening of the Beaty Biodiversity Museum (BBM) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, British Columbia and the museum is going strong. Having gone through many changes developing the procedures and policies that both protect and showcase its invaluable collections, the BBM is a pertinent case study for dealing with the issues that come with setting up a natural history museum in the Pacific Ring of Fire. Unique in Canada and perhaps the world, the BBM has all of its collection space publicly accessible. All the displays and exhibits are contained within the collection storage area and are thus subject to all that comes with public display. This coupled with being located in Vancouver British Columbia, an earthquake prone region, makes building and maintaining a natural history museum quite the task.

From the onset, planning the building and storage space created a complex suite of issues with building code, collection protection, and public access. Balancing between the various needs pulling the design and building construction in different directions has seen the BBM develop in many unique and interesting ways to utilize, protect and exhibit its over 2 million specimens. Meeting British Columbia's strict earthquake, fire and safety codes coupled with housing UBC's collections made for a museum with a distinctive set of problems. From the gargantuan task of moving the collections, to insect infestations and floods there are

many events that would give any museum worker nightmares. There have been multiple conservation projects and a huge digitization initiative across collections. Major expansions in the exhibits, education, policies, and evaluation realms mean our work is always changing. Now well into our eighth year, the BBM has gone through many changes. Always growing the collections, while constantly adapting to our ever-changing community's needs, the BBM has been able to expand its exhibits, program offerings, and profile all while maintaining the utmost in collections care and conservation.

Keywords

earthquake, disaster, policies, biodiversity

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